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San Joaquin Valley "Salmonids in the Classroom" Program Enhancement

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

a. Project Title: San Joaquin Valley "Salmonids in the Classroom" Program Enhancement

Applicant: Ms. Gail Hickman Davis, Fish and Wildlife Interpreter
California Department of Fish and Game, Region 4
1234 E. Shaw Avenue, Fresno, CA 93710

b. Project Description and Primary Biological/Ecological Objectives

Background: The Salmonids in the Classroom program was initiated in the San Joaquin Valley about 10 years ago and has steadily grown due to the effectiveness and utility in the classroom. DFG, Region 4 now has a Fish and Wildlife Interpreter serving as Salmonids in the Classroom program coordinator. This program is very popular with educators, parents and students in the Valley. It is a successful and growing effort. The goal of DFG's "Salmonids in the Classroom" is to teach students on an ongoing basis about the life cycles of salmon and steelhead and the ecosystems these fish function best in. This program is an interdisciplinary program for students from grades K-12. Over 100 teachers and 7,200 students were involved during this last school year in the Valley and foothill communities. We anticipate at least 20 more classrooms will participate in the 1998-99 academic year with funding recently approved by the Commercial Salmon Trollers Association (augmented Salmon Stamp Funds). Attachment 1 shows the current distribution of our program.

Description: The objective of this project is to enhance the resources (and their utility) which we can make available to the educators who are or will be participating in the Salmonids in the Classroom program. This project is divided into four tasks. This project includes researching documents and literature on the history of salmon and steelhead in the rivers of the San Joaquin Valley. This information will then be developed into lesson plans and educational videos which can be used by classroom teachers who are participating in the Salmonids in the Classroom program. Recognizing the diversity in our population demographics, we will also have student lesson activity and reference sheets translated into four of the most common languages spoken by limited English speaking students in the San Joaquin Valley and elsewhere.

Primary Biological/Ecological Objectives: The primary objectives of the Salmonids in the Classroom program is to nurture awareness, knowledge, and appreciation of aquatic and terrestrial natural resources in students using salmon and steelhead as a model. The program also encourages stewardship as well as active participation in restoration and conservation activities in the students' watersheds.

c. Approach/Tasks/Schedule

Task 1: Translate up to six student activity and reference pages from the Salmonids in the Classroom curriculum into Spanish, Hmong, Lao, and Khmer. This Task will be completed within six months of receiving funding.

Task 2: Complete a review of historical information on the rivers in the San Joaquin Valley and

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have copies of the information and relevant historic photos made. Task 2 will be completed within eighteen months of receiving funding.

Task 3: Develop up to 4 objective lesson plans which discuss a historical perspective of salmon populations and life histories in the Central Valley. Task 3 will be completed within one year of completing Task 2.

Task 4: Create objective educational videos about the history of salmon and steelhead in the San Joaquin Valley. Task 4 will be completed within six months of completion of Task 3.

d. Justification for Project and Funding by CALFED

Over time, the Salmonids in the Classroom program can help to develop a citizenry in the San Joaquin Valley that has gone from only a general awareness of environmental issues, toward informed action at the individual and community level concerning the conservation of their local watersheds. If supported adequately and guided well, the program is open to educational systems (public and private) in both rural and urban areas.

e. Budget Costs and Third Party Impacts

Costs for the existing program are currently provided by existing DFG budgets, community and industry sponsors, and other funding sources. CALFED funds requested for this project are as follows: Task 1, \$3,000; Task 2, \$30,000; Task 3, \$15,000; Task 4, \$37,000; Total funding requested: \$85,000

No adverse third party impacts are known at this time.

f. Applicants' Qualifications

DFG staff have been involved in environmental education for the past ten years. Region 4 staff works closely with personnel of local public educational systems to ensure the quality and applicability of our program. The DFG has the clerical, fiscal, and contractual personnel necessary to support the biological and technical experts to administer this project.

g. Monitoring and Data Evaluation

For the existing program an annual report is produced. This report shows the programs expansion geographically and with numbers of teachers and students participating. Questionnaires, surveys and oral interviews of teachers and volunteers are currently used by the DFG staff to evaluate the program. These methods will continue and incorporate these new proposed increments into the monitoring and evaluation.

h. Local Support/Coordination with other Programs/Compatibility with CALFED objectives

Support for this program comes from local community groups, fishing clubs, irrigation districts, the gravel industry, school districts, and other government agencies.

This program increases public awareness, knowledge, and appreciation of the function of local watershed ecosystems. The students are encouraged to participate in conservation programs and wise use of the diverse natural resources of watersheds.